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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 000963

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: USDOT Secretary Mineta's Visit to the Netherlands  
April 4-5

1. Summary: In a meeting with Dutch Transport Minister Karla Peijs, Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta explained the U.S. negotiating position in the current civair talks with the European Commission and asked for Dutch support with other member states to conclude an agreement. He and the minister also reviewed such issues as road safety, traffic management, and inland waterways, offering to share experiences and exchange best practices on shared transportation problems. The two also visited the Port of Rotterdam for a briefing on the port's security measures and the presentation of compliance certificates to five entities meeting the IMO's new International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) requirements, which become mandatory on July 1 of this year.

End summary.

2. Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta visited the Netherlands April 4-5 for discussions with Dutch Minister of Transport and Water Management Peijs and a visit to the Port of Rotterdam. During a 90-minute meeting with the Minister and several senior MOT staff, the Secretary reviewed and defended the US position in the US-EU civair negotiations. He explained that, although the US had initially preferred not to put anything on the table that would require legislative action, we were now prepared to go to the Hill to request an increase in the allowable foreign ownership of US carriers from 25 to 49 percent. On cabotage, however, which he described as a "third rail" issue, the Secretary said that he had made it clear to Commissioner Loyola de Palacio that cabotage remained off the table. The Secretary and Ambassador Sobel appealed to Minister Peijs for Dutch support for concluding an agreement and for helping to influence other member states, such as Germany, France, and Italy. The Secretary commented that such support was particularly valuable in view of the fact that some parties would prefer to see no agreement at all. Minister Peijs replied that the Netherlands was in favor of an agreement; she added, however, that other Europeans questioned U.S. intentions to go beyond the current talks to conclude subsequent agreements and were therefore reluctant to agree to anything short of a comprehensive deal.

3. When DOT Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs Karan Bhatia noted that asked whether some EU member states preferred not to see the Commission score a big victory in the civair talks, out of concern that this might advance the Commission's claims for competence vis--vis the member states regarding other issues, Ministry civair official Rene Fennes said that the Netherlands had no such problem, seeing civil aviation as a natural area for shared jurisdiction between the Commission and member states. He also noted, and Minister Peijs concurred, that the Netherlands could undertake some "quiet diplomacy" to help facilitate internal EU consensus. He added, however, that the Dutch had their own interests at stake in the negotiations and would have to proceed cautiously. Minister Peijs added that she thought that the Commission made a better negotiating partner than the individual member states for the U.S. on civair issues, as it made the two sides better able to strike a balanced agreement. A/S Bhatia commented that the U.S. had to proceed in a step-by-step manner in the talks and that accepting the idea of pan-European carriers, as exemplified by the KLM-Air France merger, had been a major issue for us.

Road safety, better use of waterways  
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4. Turning to other issues, the Secretary said that he was pleased that the World Health Organization had declared traffic accidents to be a major public health problem, which would help to focus greater attention on the issue. He said that traffic accidents were the leading cause of death in the US for the 18-34 age group and cost the economy some \$230 billion annually. Accordingly, the President had issued a directive making road safety a top administration priority, and DOT was attacking the problem on a variety of fronts. For example, better highway engineering included such measures as rumble strips to alert drivers to when they were veering off the road, improved drainage to prevent hydroplaning and the loss of vehicle control, and better lighting and signaling. The US is also pressing ahead with anti-alcohol campaigns and trying to raise seat belt usage to 90 percent from the current 79 percent. Twenty states now have 'primary' seat belt laws

that allow police officers to stop vehicles and issue citations for the lack of seat belt usage alone, rather than 'secondary' laws that permit such citations only when drivers are stopped for some other cause. Minister Peijs noted that the Netherlands had embarked on a public education campaign targeted at getting children in the habit of wearing seat belts, in the hope that they would then pressure their parents to do likewise.

15. The Minister also described the Netherlands' efforts to reduce overall congestion on the roads, particularly involving hazardous cargo. She said that by 2007 there would be a new rail line to Germany dedicated to freight, which would be both faster and more efficient but also more amenable to control from a security standpoint. Picking up on the theme of moving freight off the highways, the Secretary asked what the Netherlands is doing to promote

#### SIPDIS

short sea shipping. He commented that, while there was considerable freight haulage along both the U.S. east and west coasts and in the Mississippi basin, the Netherlands is a leader in using both inland waterways and short sea shipping. The Minister replied that an integrated port traffic management system encompassing both ocean-bound and inland shipping is vital for such operations, involving real-time information on ship and barge movements and their cargoes. Both sides indicated a desire to continue sharing information on respective approaches to addressing traffic congestion, with Minister Peijs inviting the Department to send a representative to a conference on short sea shipping being convened in the Netherlands in May, and the Secretary inviting the Minister to meet with U.S. experts on road tolling and tour some tolling facilities when she visits the United States in October.

#### Improving transportation security

16. The Minister also noted the vital role of security in today's transportation system. After the Secretary expressed appreciation for the Netherlands' early adoption of the Container Security Initiative at Rotterdam, Minister Peijs said that the Dutch had no regrets and saw the absolute necessity of protecting such important national assets as Schiphol Airport and the port of Rotterdam with the most advanced security measures available. On the radiological monitors at Rotterdam, the Minister said that it had been bureaucratically difficult to get them approved, due to the number of ministries involved, but that the effort had been well worth it. The Secretary then outlined the origin and development of the Transportation Security Administration and its eventual move into the Department of Homeland Security, adding that DOT retained responsibility for air safety issues via the FAA, issues which sometimes overlap with the security responsibilities of DHS.

17. The Minister then made a strong comment to the effect that, while the Netherlands of course saw the need for strict air security, the Dutch would like to have the opportunity to discuss with the U.S. how best to achieve it, rather than to receive unilateral directives. On PNR, she said that her 14 years in the European Parliament had made her well aware of Europarliamentarians' sensitivities on privacy matters and suggested that a videoconference with DHS officials might help to allay some of their concerns. She also suggested that continuing communication efforts with MEPs would be necessary in view of the expected turnover of perhaps 60 percent in the European Parliamentary elections to be held in June. Assistant Secretary Bhatia noted that some MEPs were scheduled to come to Washington this Spring in May and that this would be a good opportunity to further the dialogue.

#### Visit to Port of Rotterdam

18. The Secretary and the Minister then proceeded to Rotterdam for a visit to its harbor control center and a boat tour of the port, the world's busiest in terms of tonnage handled annually. Port officials provided an overview of the operations of the port, which extends some 25 miles from the North Sea coast to the city of Rotterdam and which handles some 30,000 sea-going and over 100,000 inland vessels per year. The port's information system, displayed for the Secretary and the Minister, provides real-time GPS-based data on the movements of vessels entering, exiting, and moored at the port, with color coding used to mark those bearing hazardous cargoes. The visit concluded with a trip through the port, during which certificates were presented by the Minister and Mayor of Rotterdam to five companies (operators of shipping lines, ship repair facilities, and port terminals) already in compliance with the International Maritime Organization's International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) code, due to go into effect on July 1 of this year.

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